

KATANGA:

CPYRGHT

The Myth of Discipline

Moise Tshombe was playing Winston Churchill. Enraged by the U.N.'s decision to forcibly disarm the 200-odd European mercenaries who form the nucleus of his secessionist army, the scrappy little President took to the radio with a dramatic appeal.

"I Thant will launch a war on the territory," said Tshombe. "When the time comes, the Katanga fighters arise in every street, on every path, on every highway, in every village."

Many Katangans took their President's words to heart. Clapping iron pots and pans on their heads and seizing wooden rifles, bows and arrows, and machetes, they marched up and down the boulevards of Elisabethville, chanting tribal songs. Tshombe's regular army reacted more violently. In a brutal attack on two U.N. officials, its soldiers demonstrated that they are as undisciplined as those of leftist Antoine Gizenga (charged with massacring the Italian airmen) and those of the Congolese Government who perpetrated the rape of Leopoldville.

From Elisabethville, *Newsweek's* John P. Nugent cabled this report:

Flying down from Leopoldville to Elisabethville, Brian Urquhart, assistant to the chief of the U.N. Congo operation, turned to George Ivan Smith, the senior U.N. civilian officer in Katanga, and asked ironically:

"Are the natives friendly?"

"Yes," Ivan Smith replied. "They are most of the time."

Three hours later the two officials were guests at a cocktail party given by the U.S. Consulate in Elisabethville to honor the arrival of U.S. Sen. Thomas Dodd, an outspoken admirer of the Tshombe regime. Among the guests at the reception were Tshombe himself and Interior Minister Godefroid Munongo. The party was noisy and friendly.

At 8:30 that night, Ivan Smith and Urquhart left the party to go to a dinner given in Dodd's honor by an American businessman. As their car with its U.N. plates approached their host's house, a group of soldiers, ostensibly on guard outside the residence of Katanga's Norbert Muke, shouted derisively, "à bas l'ONU!" (French initials for the U.N.)

Smith and Urquhart had hardly reached the house when 30 Katangese soldiers burst in after them. One soldier roughly fingered Ivan Smith's jacket and began to rant. "Though I am black and you are white, I am as good as any white." To the other guests were held back by the soldiers, the two U.N. officials were set upon by the Africans. A

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rifle butt hit Ivan Smith in the ribs. Another gun butt smashed Urquhart in the face. "Watch out," yelled Ivan Smith as he saw one of the soldiers rush at Urquhart from behind. At that the soldiers were ready.

Convinced they had captured the senior U.N. official and the Congolese life-guard's Colonel Godefroid Muke, the Katangans dragged Urquhart and Ivan Smith out of the house and kicked and dragged them toward a truck.

Just at that moment, Senator and Mrs. Dodd arrived in their limousine. With them was U.S. Consul Lewis Hoffacker, 38, a slight, bespectacled Pennsylvanian. Hoffacker rushed into the crowd, dragged Ivan Smith out of the truck, and half-carried him to the front seat of the Dodds' limousine. Then he ordered the driver: "Let's get out of here." The Katangans raised their rifles and Hoffacker yelled: "Everyone on the floor." As they drove off, the Americans heard Urquhart calling: "Please help me."

Speeding to the Presidential palace, Hoffacker and Dodd sought to get

Urquhart freed. But Tshombe was not home. Not until 11:30 p.m. did the horns after the incident was Ivan Smith able to reach Interior Minister Munongo. "Release Urquhart within 30 minutes," he snapped, "otherwise the U.N. Command will turn Elisabethville inside out."

That night Urquhart, bleeding profusely, had been taken by the soldiers to their camp outside the city. "They were divided," he recalled later. "Half of them were for killing me; half against." With a gasp at his head, Urquhart talked fast about everything he could think of. "I thought I was finished," he said afterward.

Eventually, at midnight Munongo arrived. Visibly shaken, he demanded Urquhart's release; meekly, a soldier turned him over. Helping Urquhart into his car, the Cabinet minister drove to the American Consulate, followed by President Tshombe in his limousine. They all drank glasses of Scotch before

*A former British paratrooper who once before came close to death when his chute failed at 2,000 feet. Falling into a newly plowed field, he broke numerous bones but survived.

Urquhart and Ivan Smith were taken to the hospital.

Both men had suffered painful injuries. Urquhart, a broken hand and nose; Ivan Smith, some cracked ribs. But their experience had shown that the much-vaunted discipline of Moise Tshombe's army is just as much a myth as is that of the Congolese Army, run from Leopoldville. The U.N. not only had its mandate to restore order in the secessionist province, it now had a reason for moving in.